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ABSTRACT

This report presents a case study of how Hagerstown Junior College (HJC) has adjusted its curriculum to meet the challenges presented by the "new" student, the needs of the community, and the need for institutional self renewal. HJC has adopted a modularized, audio-tutorial, contractual (MATC) system of instruction. This system uses diagnostic pretesting, a variety of learning experiences and instructional media, and a formal system for setting behavioral objectives. Preliminary examinations of student achievement on the basis of contract completion rates, grade distribution patterns, attrition, and student satisfaction indicate that the MATC system is an effective strategy for meeting the diversity of the "new" student population. In order to meet the needs of the community, HJC has instituted a program for prison inmates, has cooperated to provide general education courses for students of a local proprietary business college, has provided programs for the military personnel stationed at nearby Fort Ritchie, and has granted credits to students enrolled in courses offered through the Maryland College of the Air television network. Aspects of HJC's staff development program include a series of annual workshops, an instructional clinic, and a system of college funded instructional research and development. (NHM)

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MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

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Introduction

"Man's yesterday may never be like his tomorrow;
Nothing may endure but change."

One hundred and fifty years ago, the poet Shelley penned lines which capture the cliche of the '70's - change. The pool of knowledge available to society doubles every ten years. Ninety percent of all scientists who have ever lived are now living.[1] Political scientist Reo M. Christenson comments that "man's current capacity either to destroy himself or to ravage his environment beyond repair is unmatched in previous history."[2]

Clearly, some social institution must attempt to manage unsettling - if not runaway - change. For people who will spend half of their lives in the twenty-first century, tradition-bound curricula and teaching techniques are not what is needed to cope with the demands of the new century.

The two-year college has a unique, and potentially creative, role to play in preparing people to cope with change. 2.5 million individuals attend nearly eight hundred such institutions.[3] These colleges are becoming America's source of universal access to post-secondary education. Also, during the past decade the nation has turned to the two-year college as a source of the technical expertise needed by a service-oriented society. Finally, as the need for skill up-grading and re-training has become paramount, the phenomenon of the two-year college as a center for life-long learning has emerged. These diverse functions comprise the dynamics of today's two-year college. How have the dynamics effected

instruction?

Current literature highlights three challenges facing the two-year college. They are: the new student, response to community need, and institutional self-renewal. What follows is a case study of how one college is meeting the challenge of change.

Challenge I: The New Student

The term "new student" is fast becoming a cliche. During the 70's, two-year colleges have been concerned about clients who came to them as a result of open admissions policies. These individuals differ from the traditional college student: they are older, less academically sophisticated, and more pragmatic in their reasons for attending.[4] College curricula must be modified to respond to their changing needs.

Hagerstown Junior College has adopted a system of instruction designed to serve the diversity of the New Student. The strategy is modularized, audio-tutorial, contractual instruction.[5] Modularized instruction focuses on the cognitive style of the learner. By using diagnostic pretesting, learning prescriptions can be prepared for each individual. One learner may require visual stimulation, while another peer interaction. Multiple learning paths encourage divergent programming. The learning manager monitors each student's progress. An eclectic design allows the student to move in a linear or branching mode. Previous mastery of some competencies allows concentration on those yet to be achieved. Time is the independent variable in the learning module equation.

Basically, the audio-tutorial structure is an approach to individualizing instruction which uses a variety of learning experiences and instructional media. These components are integrated into a procedure including (1) large gatherings designed to outline general principles, (2) seminars where materials is analyzed and synthesized, and (3) controlled study conditions in which the student engages in those individual learnings activities which comprise his learning prescription. Competence is measured in terms of the learning steps which structure the gatherings, seminars, and individual sessions.

Contractual learning is based on the principle of agreement between equal parties. The members of the instructional team bring to the relationship expertise in subject matter and learning theory. The student provides awareness of his goals and assessment of the resources he can expend in the transaction. An arrangement is made between the student and the learning system. The student agrees to complete certain tasks within a specified time while the team guarantees certification of competence, and a specific grade, upon completion of the sequence.

Does the strategy work? At ASU, contractors seeking the BSE model have gathered data on its effect. The major variables considered were: contract completion, grade distribution patterns, attrition, and student satisfaction. Over a [illegible] trends emerge.

Over a period of 24 months, contract completion at the grade level initially indicated averaged 68 percent. Two patterns of

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

[illegible]

ment during the summer.

Have the proposals proven productive? Yes; much of the material critical to the College's MATC instructional system has been developed under summer contract. More importantly, the faculty view the process as tangible commitment by the college to instructional excellence. They consider themselves part of a team that is cooperating to fulfill the mission of the college.

Staff development is important in meeting the challenge of change. At HJC, staff development has sought to achieve both self-actualization for the instructor and institutional renewal for the college. As Cohen points out, a faculty committed to improving learning can foster self-actualization and assist with institutional renewal.[9] Institutional renewal contributes to managing change toward positive, productive ends.

Conclusion

Martorana and Kuhns advance an interactive forces theory of change management. They conclude that social forces exist which can assist colleges in coping with change. The challenges and forces must interact if change is to be directed toward productive outcomes.[10]

At Hagerstown Junior College, social forces within the service area have assisted the college in managing the challenges of new students, community needs, and institutional renewal. This case study should prove illustrative to those seeking to design a model whereby challenges produce decisions effecting change management.

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